

each one of us in this Chamber, a voting card that is ironically just about the same size as a credit card, a Visa or Mastercard, that most Americans carry in their pockets. This credit card for 40 years has run up the deficit, a trillion-dollar deficit that we have now, bills that we are going to be paying in the future even if we were to cut spending drastically for years to come now.

We have a lot of catching up to do, Mr. Speaker. This voting card that we have has been put in the electronic voting card slots here for many years running up deficits that our children, as I looked at my children's faces last week, I felt very sad for the fact that we have so many years of catching up to do to cut spending so that we can preserve their future, Mr. Speaker, so that when they grow up, they still have the same opportunities that we have in this country now to live the American dream, as I did.

I come from a neighborhood, low-income neighborhood, primarily Spanish-speaking, on the south side of San Antonio, and I had no special privilege when I grew up. All I had was opportunity guaranteed by this wonderful country of ours. But at the time I was not saddled with the tremendous deficit that the Congress had left behind; therefore, as I grew up, and my father often had to work two jobs to send us to school, he was not faced with looming mega interest rates and deficits in his future that we are going to saddle our ability as a family to prosper.

That opportunity could be threatened, Mr. Speaker, in the future because if we keep running up the charges with these credit cards that we vote with, we are going to threaten the future for our children. My constituents understand this as well, Mr. Speaker. They know, I represent one of the poorest districts in the Nation, they understand how difficult it is to live on a budget.

These are tough choices that we must make and must continue to make. When we cut the deficit and we have a balanced budget, we are going to have lower interest rates for our children as well in the future. When they want to buy a car, when they want to borrow money to go to school, to go to college, when they want to buy, make that first purchase to buy a stereo or books for college or anything that they need to sustain themselves, they are going to have lower interest rates as we continue, as this Congress has done, in cutting spending to cut the deficit and balance the budget.

It is with our children's hearts in mind, Mr. Speaker, that I am going to continue working to cut spending in this Congress, because I know that is what the American people want.

I came from the private sector, never ever having held public office before being elected in 1992, and I remember what it is like to be in the private sector making tough decisions to balance the budget at your business, in your

homes, at the dining room table each night having to decide what you have to do to make the future of your family sustain itself and not with a deficit but with a promising future because you are paying your bills as you are going along.

I promise, Mr. Speaker, that as long as I am here serving in this wonderful Congress, I am going to use this credit card wisely and continue to cut spending for the future of our children in this country because, Mr. Speaker, I ask if we are not here to do this for the future of our children, I ask what are we doing here, what are we here for in the first place?

REFORM WEEK HAS CEASED TO EXIST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, Reform Week, it has been on a life support system for the past few weeks, but now the plug has been pulled and Reform Week has been officially terminated.

The Republican leadership announced less than 2 hours ago that Reform Week, the much-heralded and touted week that was going to turn the House of Representatives back over to the American people, has been postponed once again. This is the same Reform Week that had become the Reform Hour and now has simply ceased to exist.

What happened? Well, rather than actually engaging in real reform, the Republican leadership in this House had decided to bring to the floor of the House legislation that would not actually reform the system but, quite to the contrary, would make it worse.

Ten of my Republican colleagues circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter this week that said, and I quote, "Instead of leveling the playing field in elections, this bill will result in greater incumbent protection. The bill actually increases the amounts that wealthy individuals can contribute to Federal elections." This is the letter. I am not making it up.

That is right, they are right. Under current law, an individual can give \$25,000. Under the Republican campaign finance reform bill, an individual will be able to give up to \$3.1 million. I have to repeat that because the magnitude is startling, it truly is. But it is not startling when you consider that the Speaker of the House said not too long ago that rather than less money in the system in terms of campaigns, we need more money into the system. That is why we had this piece of legislation.

Again, an individual will be able to give up to \$3.1 million. Current law again, individuals can contribute \$25,000. It is mind-boggling to think of how they have turned this concept of reform into something that is totally unimaginable to anyone here, let alone the American public who truly believes

that we need to reform our campaign finance system, and we do.

This is not reform. As my Republican colleagues also said in their "Dear Colleague," and I quote again,

The average American will be left even further behind in the Washington money chase as they are frozen out of political process. Given the fact that only about 1 percent of Americans gave contributions over \$200 or more during the last election, it is indisputable that raising the individual contributions limit will only increase the influence of the wealthy on our political process.

Mr. Speaker, no wonder the House of Representatives is at one of its all-time lowest approval ratings in history. The American people have lost confidence in this institution's ability to lead and in this institution's ability to do the right thing.

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We have no business considering legislation that will make it even harder for ordinary individuals to participate in the political process and make it easier for the rich to participate in this process.

This bill is a sham, just in the same way that Reform Week is a sham. Reforming the process has deteriorated into providing political cover to politicians who came to Washington and they promised to make a difference. Well, it is not going to work.

Even once again the Republican "Dear Colleague" says, "The fact is that H.R. 3760; that is, the Republican campaign finance reform bill, will not give you political cover as we head into Reform Week."

We do need to pass real campaign finance reform so that hard-working Americans can participate in the political process and that the special interests are limited in the political process. And doing that would go a very, very long way toward restoring the American people's faith in our ability to govern our own House, and it would restore their faith and put in the faith and the confidence and the trust that they would like to put in to those people who are elected every 2 years to do the people's business.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to replace the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] on the list of 5-minute special orders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYWORTH). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

DRUG ABUSE AND LACK OF LEADERSHIP IN THE WHITE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, I serve on the committee that has been dealing with the FBI files